



Public Health Committee

Senate Bill 317: An Act Concerning Community Based Health Care Services

February 17, 2017

**Testimony of Michelle Hanlon, RN
Administrator
VITAS Healthcare®**

VITAS Healthcare® (pronounced VEE-tahs), supports SB 317, AAC Community Based Health Care Services because it will foster the benefits of community para-medicine and mobile integrated healthcare for hospice patients in Connecticut. VITAS partners with a number of community based ambulance providers in other states. In our experience, these innovative services enhance the quality of care provided to terminally-ill patients at home in crisis.

VITAS is eager to explore stronger partnerships with the state's ambulance providers to ensure the most rapid response to patients in crisis, reduce revocations from hospice services and assure safe transitions. These partnerships have also helped hospice patients stay within their chosen plan of care, reduce 911 calls and eliminate most emergency department visits. Due to these benefits, 30 states already utilize this modern delivery of care.

VITAS Healthcare, the nation's leading provider of hospice services, has been providing hospice services in Connecticut since 2004. VITAS has been a pioneer and leader in the hospice movement since 1978. VITAS operates hospice programs in 15 states and the District of Columbia; employing nearly 12,051 professionals who care for terminally ill patients daily, primarily in the patients' homes and also in our VITAS Inpatient Hospice Unit at Saint Mary's Hospital, in hospitals, nursing homes and assisted living communities/residential care facilities for the elderly. As a certified hospice program, we operate under Medicare's Conditions of Participation (CoP) for Hospice, 42 C.F.R. § 418 et. seq. ("CoPs") and are licensed as home health agency by the State of Connecticut.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments. You can contact VITAS Healthcare Director of Public Affairs Chris Santarsiero with any questions or comments at (203) 232-8422 or chris.santarsiero@vitas.com.